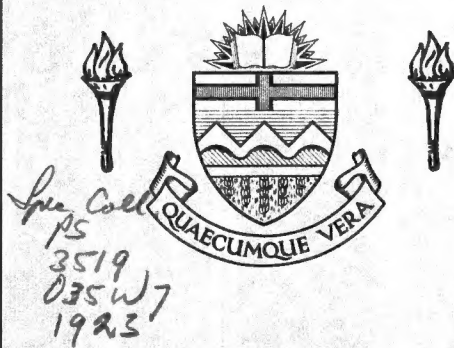


A Winnipeg
Chapbook

Christmas, 1923

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With every good wish

A. C. Thurman.

A W I N N I P E G C H A P B O O K

THESE little pieces, made in Winnipeg, are for my present friends and any who shall like them even a little.

The selection has been made around the theme of Canadian nightfall. In this starry season, when dawn and noon and sundown are intimate, when mountain and lake and river are snow-muffled, when the wild flowers are abed for their long confinement, it is pleasant indeed to remember the melody of summer nights, to recall the play of the moon on the roses and on the face of our plentiful waters. Comforting also is it to view the clean steadfastness and serenity of our winter heavens, to interpret their benign symbolism, and to realize that though uncertainty and disappointment are with us yet, there is a tender beauty presiding through the night.

And if in these brief pages there is a whisper of quiet hope and beckoning beauty, then the little chapbook will have fulfilled its greeting.

A. E. JOHNSON,
M.A.C., Winnipeg

NOTE—The poem entitled "At the Sign of the Star," but for which this Booklet would be even less justified, was written last Epiphany Sunday evening after my return from church. In other pieces I have indicated the place of their conception.

A W I N N I P E G C H A P B O O K

AT THE SIGN OF THE STAR

Purest gold for the Holy Babe,
All from the hands of a king;
But for the little Mother there,
Not a thing, not a thing.

Frankincense for the Royal Babe,
A king unto a King;
But for the Queenly Mother there,
Not a thing, not a thing.

Myrrh for the cradled Son of Man,
His cross foreshadowing;
But for the tender Mother-heart,
Not a thing, not a thing.

Lady, what offering offered then
Thy soul could have sufficed,
Whiles in thy quivering lap there lay
Sleeping the Tiny Christ?

A W I N N I P E G C H A P B O O K

SNOWFALL AT NIGHT

(Over the Parliament Buildings, Winnipeg)

There is an ancient fuller in the skies—
See the fine fabric he is weaving forth!
Hush all the world—you shall not hear the rustling;
It breaks, is spoiled, touching even my dear love's face.

See, myriads of crystal bees wingweary,
Lost lucifers from some elysian hive,
Are slowly falling through the muffled night,
Deathkissed by the angered queens.

A W I N N I P E G C H A P B O O K

THE CLOAK

(Main Street, Winnipeg)

When I am weary at close of day,
And shadows are folding my eyes,
I feel a ghost hand of quietness,
Hushed are my sighs.

I meet the wan, wistful regards
Of my homegoing fellowmen,
And a lavender mist of weariness
Enfolds us then.

Oh, I think that I must be saved
(So strongly myself-and-they),
I who see beauty in shadows
On faces at close of day.

A W I N N I P E G C H A P B O O K

THE DEBUTANTE

(New Moon, Fort Garry)

To the violet hall of Night she comes,
Coy debutante and slender,
Silver frock and silver shoon—
The little lady Moon.

Through the curtain, lads are peeping,
All her starry lovers,
See, their lips are whisperful:—
"She is coming, she is coming,
"She is coming in silver shoon,
"Our little lady Moon."

DUSKY REAPER

(The sickle, harvest moon setting beyond the Jefferson Highway)

Dusky reaper, laying now thy golden sickle down,
How missed you all those pretty flowers,
Yon silver daisies in the field of Night?
See how they shine in child-eyed thankfulness!
Dusky reaper, lay you now your golden sickle down.

BETHESDA

There lies the clear, untroubled pool,
And crowded are the cripples on the bank.
All day the Syrian sun has beaten down
From fierce, unrifted heavens;
Now the moon—bland, mocker moon—
Blanches the Judah hills in deeper sleep.
From sandal-worn Bethesda's marge they limp—
The troubling angel has not come for nigh a year,
And slumbering Virgin Mary is still a Baby-thing:
Faint and more faint the shuffling feet go home;
Moon-mantled lies the glossy pool,
More calm for the long, cold kiss
Of one untroubling star.

A W I N N I P E G C H A P B O O K

THE FIRST POET ✓

Gaunt, piteous, clad with skin,
She came from out the dingy cave at even
Called by the poignant crying of a bird
Whose mate lay cold in death.
Keen-eyed above her kith, she saw no bird,
But faint beyond the silver-misted marsh
The day lay slaughtered in a field of gold;
Marvelling she stood—the first of all mankind
To see the glory.

Slow ^{ly} into the dark, dank cave she moved,
A wordless wonder in her changed heart—
"There is a Thing nor meat nor drink nor stone," she
thought,
"There is a Something, Somewhere else."
Sweet Mystery had found a home.

Betimes an infant stirred within her breast;
And when the boychild grew
She'd take him to the door at slumbertime
To view the burning vision through the veil of mist:
~~He learned to see the stars,~~
~~For she won him beautiful eyes;~~
He became—God's first appraiser, with a breast of
song.

A W I N N I P E G C H A P B O O K

MOONDAWN (Over Lake Winnipeg)

The pumpkin moon is ripening
In the lavender loam of the East
Mid grey, invisible leaves.
Now, were I Jove, I would turn him
Suddenly into a great bronze spider!
Have him crawl, ceaselessly spinning,
From star to star wondrously weaving,
Up and athwart and down and up,
Till all were one in his glimmering weft
Ah, but, how could they be more lovely fair?

* * * *

See how the mistress moon,
Conquering her golden blush,
Now beams upon her veteran host!
She has laid her silver scarf
Lovingly on the breast of the lake,
And each comely star, so beautifully aware,
Is beating on the breast of Night.

God, with this glorious dumb eloquence,
What wonder that our songs are poor?

A W I N N I P E G C H A P B O O K

THE LINK

Canadian Moon, were you smiling on high
When her joyous hands
Swaddled his little form?
Did you silver the mud-wrought roof
Where, straw-pillowed, he lay?

Or, Canadian stars, were you shining alone
When the kings trod over the hills?
Did your beautiful light, through the manger chinks,
Illumine his brow?
Did your anthem die lulling down
Hearing him cry?

WEEPING STARS

Could rosy dawn and yearning sundown
Could they kiss together
They should not lovelier be
Than this sweet concord of the quiet stars
Streaming with beauty.

Cupwise I lift my hands—
Is it the mooncool night I feel?
Or can it be—the drip of their loveliness?

A W I N N I P E G C H A P B O O K

BEREAVEMENT

In a coign of the summer moon
Ah, could I rest!
Lulled in the heavenly calm
Of her velvet breast.

To see the great fold of the world,
Lilied and still,
With only the waters moving
And they at her will.

To feel the great tug of the deep,
Drawn as my heart;
Be rocked in the rhythm divine
Ordained at the start.

Then, suddenly cradled in starfall,
Earth-riding and bright,
To land 'neath the tree of our trothing,
Thy loss to indite—

In a measure of exquisite sorrow,
Moan of the tide;
And—the miracle dearly complete—
Find thee at my side.

A W I N N I P E G C H A P B O O K

MOON ON THE ROSES ✓
(A Song)

The moon is caressing the roses,
The dear little stars burn true,
But the wind has forsaken the woodland,
And I am aweary for you.

The moon is caressing the roses,
The songbird's snug in the tree,
The fawn is deep in the fernbrake—
Ah, could you come to me!

The moon is soft on the roses,
Ah, could you come to me!

SLUMBER SONG

The sandman has been tramping, tramping,
Tramping all the day;
Now the old sandman is slumbering,
Slumbering on his way.
He is very, very weary,
Weary with his bag of sand,
And his old, old limbs are tingling,
Tingling like my window pane
When the trees are singing, sighing.

But the fairyfolk are winging,
Winging from the fields of sleep;
All their little limbs are powdery
From the blue and golden flowers;
On my eyelids they are fallen,
I can hear them softly humming, humming;
And their scented wings are fanning, fanning,
On my heavy eyes,
On my heavy, sleepy eyes—
Oh, I cannot help adreaming, dreaming, dreaming . . .

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the document.

2. The second part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the document.

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